

REMARKS

Claims 15-16, 18-24, 26-27, 29, 31 and 32 are pending in the application. Claims 15 and 29 have been amended. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim (claim 15).

Applicants have amended claim 15 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 17. Accordingly, claim 15 and claims 16, 18-24, 26 and 27 which depend from claim 15 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

I. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 15, 16, 18, 19, 21-24, 26, 27, 29 AND 30 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 15, 16, 18, 19, 21-24, 26, 27, 29 and 30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chou (U.S. Patent No. 5,772,905) in view of Dimitracopoulos (U.S. Patent No. 3,502,761) and Mueller (U.S. Patent No. 5,993,189).

As discussed above, Applicants have amended independent claim 15 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 17. Claims 16, 18, 19, 21-24, 26 and 27 depend from claim 15. Independent claim 29 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of original claims 17 and 30. In view of the amendment to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) has been overcome.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 15, 16, 18, 19, 21-24, 26, 27 AND 29 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 15, 16, 18, 19, 21-24, 26, 27 and 29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chou in view of Mueller and Olsson (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0189273).

As discussed above, Applicants have amended independent claim 15 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 17. Claims 16, 18, 19, 21-24, 26 and 27 depend from claim 15. Independent claim 29 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of original claims 17 and 30. In view of the amendment to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) has been overcome.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 15, 16, 18, 22-24, 26, 27, 29 AND 30 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 15, 16, 18, 22-24, 26, 27, 29 and 30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Curtiss (U.S. Patent No. 6,758,664) in view of Dimitracopoulos and Mueller.

As discussed above, Applicants have amended independent claim 15 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 17. Claims 16, 18, 22-24, 26 and 27 depend from claim 15. Independent claim 29 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of original claims 17 and 30. In view of the amendment to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) has been overcome.

IV. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 15, 16, 18, 22-24, 26, 27, 29 AND 30 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 15, 16, 18, 22-24, 26, 27, 29 and 30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Curtiss in view of Olsson and Mueller.

As discussed above, Applicants have amended independent claim 15 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 17. Independent claim 29 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of original claims 17 and 30. In view of the amendment to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) has been overcome.

V. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 20, 31 AND 32 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 20, 31 and 32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chou in view of Dimitracopoulos and Mueller and in further view of Hosoe (U.S. Patent No. 6,766,999).

As discussed above, Applicants have amended independent claim 15 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 17. Claim 20 depends from claim 15. Independent claim 29 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of original claims 17 and 30. Claims 31 and 32 depend from claim 29. In view of the amendment to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) has been overcome.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, claims 15-16, 18-24, 26-27, 29, 31 and 32 are believed to be allowable and the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Should a petition for an extension of time be necessary for the timely reply to the outstanding Office Action (or if such a petition has been made and an additional extension is necessary), petition is hereby made and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees (including additional claim fees) to Deposit Account No. 18-0988.

Respectfully submitted,

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